



Fact Sheet

Florida State University Low-Level Radiation Waste Disposal Site Apalachicola National Forest

Overview

The Florida State University (FSU) Low-Level Radiation Waste Disposal Site (FSU-LLRW or Site) is in a remote area within the Apalachicola National Forest in Leon County, approximately 20 miles southwest of Tallahassee, Florida. The USDA Forest Service is examining this 0.36-acre Site to evaluate environmental impacts; assess any potential public health risks; and address any impacts and mitigate potential risks associated with historical disposal of FSU laboratory wastes in this area.



FSU Low-Level Radiation Waste Disposal Site

Site History

On July 20, 1966, the USDA Forest Service granted a special use permit (SUP) to FSU to use the subject property as a waste disposal Site for low-level radiological wastes generated from FSU's laboratory as part of research conducted under contract with the Atomic Energy Commission. Those wastes were disposed at the Site under the SUP. Radioactive contaminated solids, containerized liquids and other wastes were deposited in 26 cells between 1967 and 1979. The Site is 110 feet by 150 feet totaling approximately 0.36 acres and is surrounded by a perimeter fence approximately 6 feet high with three strands of barbed wire as required by the SUP.

Waste was reportedly prepared for disposal using 55-gallon steel drums, 5-gallon cans, glass and plastic jars, wooden and cardboard boxes, and plastic bags. Radioactivity in the disposed waste was from isotopes typical of biological research conducted at FSU.

Disposal activities concluded in 1979 and the Site was closed. No other activities have been conducted at the Site, except for surface radiation surveys and groundwater monitoring, and more recently, various site assessment activities. The SUP and Florida Department of Health (FDOH) permits did not state a requirement for an engineered barrier below or around the waste disposal unit, nor is there any evidence of an engineered hydraulic barrier having been installed that would isolate disposed waste from the groundwater, as detailed in the Phase II Environmental Site Inspection Report (Forest Service, 2018). No potable drinking water wells are located within a 2.5-mile radius of the Site.

Evaluation and Remedial Cost Analysis

Pursuant to the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), the Forest Service is evaluating the Site to determine the extent of radioactive and hazardous substances in the groundwater, and potential cleanup alternatives. Due to the impacts on groundwater quality and associated potential health risks, the evaluation is focused on the source, the waste disposal Site, and the contaminant groundwater plumes. The cost analysis is focused on the feasibility of potential corrective actions.

Potential Action

The Forest Service has identified technologies that may eliminate the source of contamination and treat the groundwater to comply with State standards. An engineering evaluation and cost analysis (EE/CA) has been prepared to evaluate potential cleanup alternatives. This draft EE/CA will be available for a 30-day public review period starting November 2, and comments can be provided via the website (link below). This Fact Sheet and other Administrative Records will also be available for public review at the website: www.fs.usda.gov/florida.



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Administrative Record Location

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Maps of the Site Location

